

THE LIBERTY "BOYS OF 76"

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post Office, February 4, 1901, by Frank Tousey.

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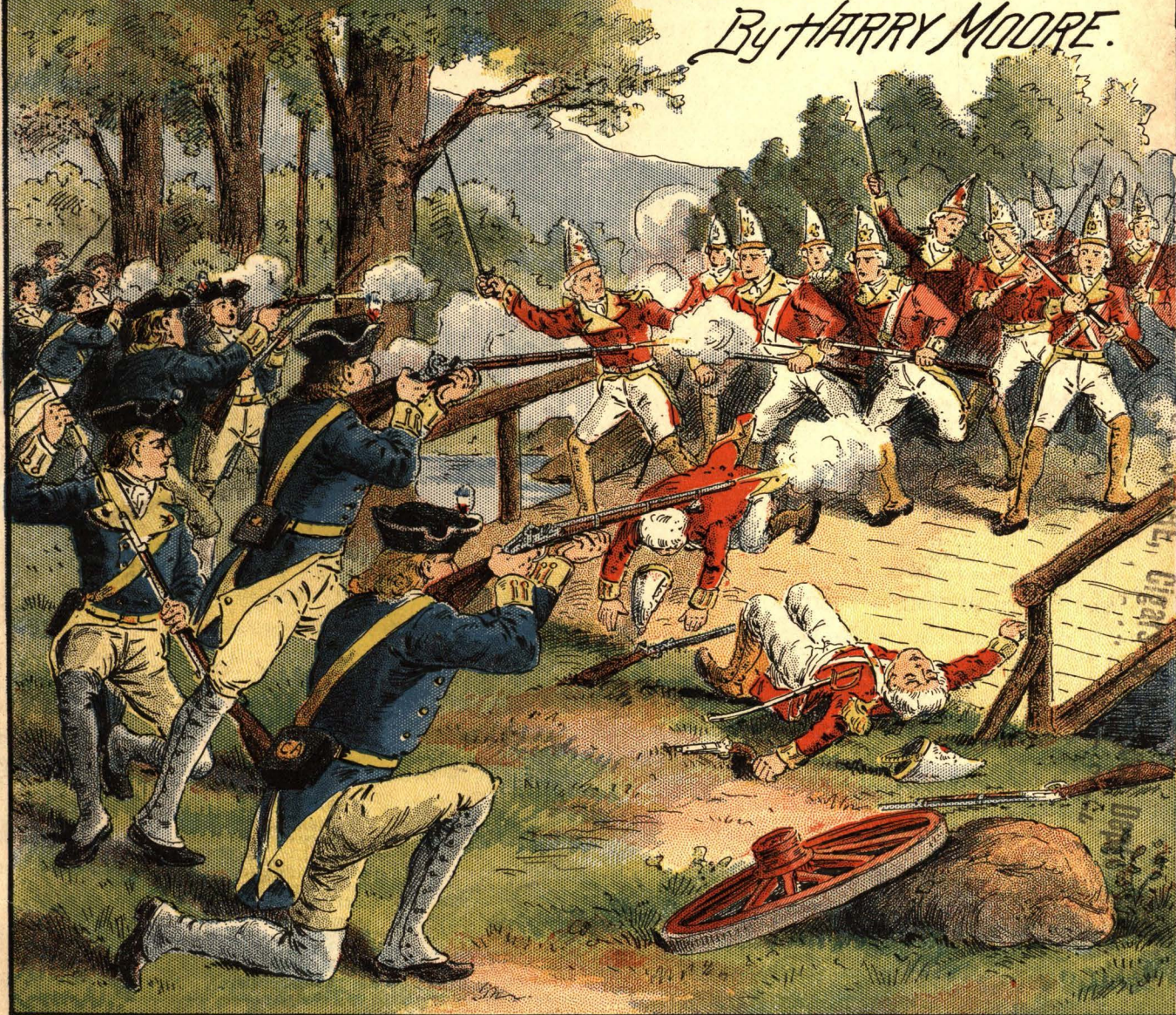
NEW YORK, DECEMBER 13, 1901.

Price 5 Cents.

THE LIBERTY BOYS AROUSED;

OR, STRIKING STRONG BLOWS FOR LIBERTY.

By HARRY MOORE.



As the redcoats came rushing across the bridge, the "Liberty Boys" poured a withering fire into their midst. Then it was hand-to-hand, and the struggle was a desperate one.

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CHAPTER I.

THE HILLS OF SANTEE.

It was mid-summer of the year 1781.

Three months before, General Greene, with only about ten hundred men, had come down into South Carolina and take it out of the control of the British.

He had so far succeeded admirably in all his attempts.

He had captured forts Watson, Motte and Granby.

He had forced Lord Rawdon and the British to evacuate Camden and Ninety-six.

He had dispersed a regiment of Tories that had been organized at a mountain town called Toryville, and was on his way to join the British at Orangeburg.

And now, with this unbroken series of victories to his credit, General Greene was taking things easy, and quietly recruiting his army from among the patriots of the vicinity, while giving his men a much-needed rest.

His army was encamped on the high hills of the Santee, and was distant just sixteen miles, as the crow flies, from the British encampment at Orangeburg.

The space between the two encampments was made up of low meadowlands, and during the most of the time it was covered with water overflowing from the Wateree and Congaree Rivers, and it looked more like a lake than anything else, the large, bushy top of an occasional pine tree sticking like a small island.

General Greene had chosen the spot for his camp with the knowledge that this was the situation during the wet season of June and July.

It made him perfectly secure, as the British could not get at him, save by marching in a roundabout way a distance of seventy miles.

All that was necessary was for him to keep a lookout to the eastward and westward, so as to make it certain that he would not be taken by surprise.

About noon of the 15th of July a small boat pushed away from the shore, near the patriot encampment.

In the boat was a single person—a young man of about twenty years.

He was a smooth-faced, bronzed and handsome young fellow, with keen, clear and unflinching eyes and a determined chin.

He looked as if he was not afraid of anything, and he did not belie his looks.

This youth was Dick Slater, the most famous scout and spy in the patriot army.

Whenever there was any dangerous undertaking on hand, one that required cool courage and good judgment, Dick was the person invariably chosen.

He had been tried, time and again, and had never been found wanting.

He had been wonderfully successful as a spy, and as captain of "The Liberty Boys of '76" he had made a great reputation for himself.

The "Liberty Boys" were youths of about Dick's age, and they had done splendid work, both in the North and in the South during the war.

They were brave as lions, and filled with the enthusiasm of youth, and when they went into a battle they went into it with such vim and energy that their enemies were appalled.

And now Dick was just starting on a dangerous expedition.

General Greene wished to know what was going on in the British encampment, and had asked Dick to go down to Orangeburg and learn all he could regarding the British and their plans.

Dick had gotten hold of a small rowboat, and had decided to make the trip straight across the temporary lake rather than take the long trip around by land.

As Dick rowed away from the shore a crowd of young fellows—the "Liberty Boys"—who stood there gave him a rousing cheer.

"Good-by, Dick!"

"Good luck to you, old man!"

"Take care of yourself!"

"Don't let the redcoats get you!"

"Keep your eyes open!"

Such were a few of the parting cautions called out as Dick rowed away.

Dick paused in his rowing long enough to wave his hand to the youths.

"I'll take care of myself, boys!" he called back. "You do the same!"

Then he rowed onward and pulled, gradually, out into the lake.

The youths watched Dick till he had become a mere speck, and then went back to their quarters.

As for Dick, he kept pulling steadily, and when he had been at work three hours he came upon a little island.

It was about a quarter of a mile long, and was right in his path.

Dick knew that he had plenty of time, and as he was somewhat tired, he decided to row around to the farther side of the island and land and rest a while.

He altered his course, so as to go around the island, and was soon on the other side.

He pulled into a little cove, and as the boat's nose grated on the gravel, Dick rose, and, placing the oars in the bottom of the boat, leaped ashore.

He seized the bow and pulled the boat up out of the water a way, and then turned—to find himself face to face with four redcoats.

CHAPTER II.

THE ISLAND.

The redcoats held leveled muskets.

There was a grim look of pleasure and triumph on the face of each.

Dick stared at the four for a few moments in silence.

Then he said:

"Hello! Who air yo' fellers?"

"We are soldiers of the king, at your service," replied one, promptly; "and now, who are you?"

"Me?"

"Yes, you."

"Oh, I'm nobuddy in pertickler; my name's Sam Harp, and I live over on ther shore, yonder."

Dick was shrewd.

He felt sure that the redcoats had seen him approaching from the north, and had laid in wait for him.

So the best thing he could do was to acknowledge that he was from the north shore.

Dick was dressed in a rough suit of clothing—ordinary homespun, and looked like a typical resident of that region.

"Oh, you live over on the north shore, do you?" the redcoat said, eyeing Dick closely.

Dick nodded.

"Yes, I live over thar."

"Humph! what are you doing away out here in a boat, then?"

"I'm bound fur ther other side."

"For what purpose?"

"W'y, yo' see, some uv our hosses got caught on thet side, w'en ther water come up, an' I'm goin' ercross ter see e they're still erlive."

"Oh, that's it?"

"Yes."

The redcoats looked at one another.

It seemed that they were mutely inquiring whether they should credit the story or not.

"What do you think of it, fellows?" asked the one who had done most of the talking.

"Seems like a rather doubtful story," said one.

"So it seems to me," from another.

"I don't believe it is the truth, at all," said the third.

Dick pretended to be frightened and distressed.

"Et's ther trooth, mister," he declared; "et's so, whether yo' b'leeve et er not."

The redcoats shook their heads.

"I guess we shall have to take charge of you, young fellow," said the spokesman; "we will take you back to camp a prisoner!"

"Take me back ter camp?"

"Yes; and as we were just on the point of starting wher we saw you coming, we will go at once. Have you any weapons?"

Dick had two pistols, but they were on his hips, back under the skirts of his coat, and did not show.

He shook his head.

"No, I hain't got no weepins," he said.

"All right; just get back into your boat, then."

Dick obeyed, entering the boat and seating himself.

"Walter, you and Harvey go and get our boat," ordered the spokesman of the redcoats; "bring it here, while Tom and I remain and keep watch over this young fellow."

Two of the redcoats hastened away.

Dick felt that if he was to effect his escape, now was the time to act.

There were only two of the enemy to contend with.

He felt that he should be able to get away from them.

He kept fidgiting around, and suddenly jerked his pistol out of the belt and leveling them, fired, both shots blen ing and sounding as one.

One of the redcoats threw up his arms and fell writhin to the ground.

The other fired at Dick, but was so rattled by the sudd

back by the youth that he did not take aim, and the bullet missed Dick.

The youth was on his feet in an instant.

With a single bound he was on the shore.

The redcoat was trying to draw a pistol, and Dick had a good opportunity to deal him a blow—which opportunity he quickly improved.

The blow was a terrific one, and the redcoat was knocked down as if he had been struck with a club.

Then Dick pushed his boat into the water and leaped in. Seizing the oars, he began rowing with all his might.

He was fifty yards from the shore by the time the redcoat whom he had knocked down had scrambled to his feet, and so far as he was concerned was out of danger.

But danger was approaching from another source.

The redcoats' boat suddenly shot around an outjutting point and came toward Dick as rapidly as it was possible for the two inmates to propel it.

They had heard the pistol shots and the report of their comrade's musket, and had taken in the situation at a glance.

Realizing that the youth was likely to make his escape, they had started in pursuit in the hope that they might be able to overhaul him.

They soon discovered that this would be a very difficult task, however.

Dick was a good hand with the oars, while the redcoats were not any better than they might be, and the result was that the fugitive easily held the lead which he had obtained.

The redcoats saw this, and decided to try to stop Dick with a bullet.

They each fired a shot at the fugitive, taking turns.

The bullets came near, but did not hit the mark.

Disappointed, the redcoats turned about and headed back toward the shore.

"They don't want to leave their comrades behind," thought Dick; "I was sure they would not. Well, I will be able to get a good lead on them now."

The redcoats were soon back at the island, and Dick and the three lift the wounded man and place him in the boat.

Then they got in and again the boat started in pursuit.

Dick was now nearly half a mile in the lead.

"I don't believe they can catch me," he thought; "their boat is large and clumsy, and there are four of them in it, fighting it down, and it will be impossible for them to row it through the water as fast as I can make this little boat go."

Dick felt that he was safe for the time being, at least. But he did not know how it would turn out, finally.

He had hoped to be able to reach the vicinity of the British encampment at Orangeburg without his presence having been noted, but now this would be impossible.

He was being chased, and would have to work under difficulties, as he had wounded one of the redcoats and thus branded himself as an enemy to the king.

However, Dick would make the best of the situation.

He decided to row as rapidly as possible, get as far in advance of his pursuers as he could, and land, and get away into the timber, and thus evade his enemies altogether.

Such was the plan which Dick figured on adopting, but when, three hours later, he came upon a small island about a mile from the mainland, he suddenly decided to try a trick.

It was yet daylight, and he feared that if he went right straight on to the shore he might be seen and captured by some of the redcoats; so he made up his mind to row around on the shore side of the island, make a landing, and let his pursuers go past on to the shore.

He was a mile ahead of his pursuers, and they would doubtless think he had succeeded in reaching the mainland by the time they rounded the island.

Dick put this plan into effect.

He made a landing and drew his boat up under some bushes.

Just as he did so, he heard a piercing scream.

CHAPTER III.

THE CABIN ON THE ISLAND.

The scream seemed to come from a point near the centre of the island.

As we have said, the island was small, being not more than a quarter of a mile long, and not much more than half that in width.

It was covered with a growth of timber.

The scream Dick had heard was the voice of a woman.

It was too shrill to be that of a man.

Dick did not hesitate.

He was always ready to render assistance to any one, and especially when the one in distress was a woman.

Dick darted through the timber in the direction of the point from which the scream had sounded.

He suddenly emerged into a little clearing.

In the centre of the clearing was a log cabin.

In the cabin a struggle of some kind was going on.

Dick could tell this by the sounds.

He ran forward without hesitation, increasing his speed as another shrill scream issued from the cabin.

The next instant Dick leaped through the open doorway and was within the cabin.

He gave a quick glance around him.

Near the centre of the one room a man was struggling with a youth of perhaps eighteen years.

At the end of the room stood a beautiful girl of about seventeen years.

Her hands were clasped, her eyes were dilated and on her face was a look of terror.

As the girl's eyes fell upon Dick she gave utterance to a cry of delight.

"Oh, sir, save him!" she cried. "Save my brother from that terrible man!"

Of course, never having seen either of the three before, Dick could have no knowledge regarding the rights of the affair, but he was impressed with the idea that the girl was in the right, and then he did not approve of a big, burly man fighting a youth such as the one who lay there.

Without a word Dick strode forward, and seizing the man by the coat-collar, jerked him off the youth.

"Stand up!" exclaimed Dick, and he gave the man another jerk, which brought him to his feet.

The man uttered a snarl of rage, and whirling, struck Dick with all his might.

Dick dodged the blow, and then out shot his fist.

It caught the man fair on the jaw.

Crack!—thud!

Down went the man with a crash.

"Good!" cried the girl. "Oh, I'm so glad you did that!"

The youth had leaped to his feet as soon as relieved of the weight of the man, and he now said:

"You'd better look out for him. He is a bad man and will try to do you damage."

"I'll look out for him," replied Dick.

The man lay where he had fallen, for a few moments, and then scrambled to his feet.

He was not a handsome man at any time, Dick judged, and now, with his face distorted with the rage which had possession of him, he looked like a demon.

"I'll kill you, you meddling young scoundrel!" he hissed.

Then he rushed at Dick, with the ferocity of a tiger.

He was a big, heavy man, and Dick gave ground a little.

Only for a few moments, and then he struck out, straight and sure.

Once, twice, thrice, and again down went the man.

He fell so hard that the cabin shook.

The girl drew a long breath of relief.

"Oh, I am so glad!" she breathed. "I was afraid he would be too strong for you."

"You are a wonderful fellow!" exclaimed the youth, in admiration. "I wish I could do that!"

Dick smiled.

"You are not heavy and strong enough," he replied.

The man lay still for nearly half a minute, and then he slowly rose to a sitting posture.

He did not offer to get to his feet.

Indeed, he did not seem in a condition to stand.

It was all he could do to sit up.

It was some little time before he could get his wavering attention fixed on Dick, and then he regarded the youth in a wondering manner.

"Say, who are you?" he asked.

"It doesn't matter who I am," replied Dick; "you keep quiet till I tell you to speak."

The man muttered something under his breath, but made no reply other than to glare angrily.

Dick turned to the youth and the girl.

He looked at them with interest.

He saw that they were as much alike in face and features as two persons well could be.

"They must be twins," he thought.

Then, aloud, he said:

"Will you explain this affair to me? Why were you engaged in a struggle with this man?"

"He is our step-father," replied the youth; "he is a Tory and wished me to join the British army down in Orangeburg, and I refused. It was not the first time that I have refused, but to-night he became angry and said he would tie me and take me to Orangeburg by force."

"The scoundrel!" exclaimed Dick.

Then he turned his glance upon the man.

"Why didn't you go and join the British army and leave your step-son alone?" Dick asked, severely.

"That's my business!" was the sullen reply.

"I'll tell you why he didn't want to do so," replied the youth. "I am almost ashamed to tell you, but he wanted to marry Jesse, here, and he wished to get me out of the way so he could frighten her into marrying him. We both hate him, as he is a big brute, and I would rather die, as would Jessie, than that she should marry him."

"I don't doubt it!" exclaimed Dick, with an admiring glance at the beautiful girl, whose face was red, now, with embarrassment caused by her brother's explanation.

Then Dick looked at the ruffian sitting there on the floor.

The youth's clear, piercing eyes seemed to go through the man.

There was withering scorn in that glance.

"You miserable scoundrel!" said Dick, in a tone of withering contempt. "Do you know what I think should be done with you?"

The ruffian shifted uneasily.

"I'll tell you what I think ought to be done with you," went on Dick; "I think you ought to be taken down to the water and drowned!"

The ruffian winced.

The youth nodded his head.

"He certainly deserves drowning!" he said.

"What is your name?" asked Dick.

"My name is Jesse Winthrop."

"And your sister's name is Jessie?"

"Yes; we are twins."

Dick nodded.

"I see," he said; "well, what shall we do with this man?"

The youth shook his head.

"I don't know," he replied.

"Is this his house?" asked Dick.

"Yes, it is," growled the man; "and unless that willful young spitfire, there, will agree to marry me, both shall leave here forever. I do not intend to furnish them a home any longer!"

"We shall be only too glad to go!" said the youth.

"Yes, indeed!" exclaimed the girl. "Oh, brother, let us get our things and go at once!"

At this instant the sound of footsteps and voices were heard.

CHAPTER IV.

DICK DRIVES THE REDCOATS AWAY.

"Good!" cried the man on the floor. "There come the British soldiers to get Jesse and take him away. I shall triumph, after all!"

Dick leaped to the door and closed and barred it.

As he turned away from the door he saw the ruffian was almost on his feet.

"Sit down!" cried Dick, in a low, threatening voice. "Sit down and keep quiet, or it will be the worse for you!"

He drew a pistol and shook it in the ruffian's face, and the alacrity with which the man obeyed the command was comical to see.

He was not composed of the stuff of which heroes are made.

Dick glanced at the youth and maiden.

The former looked startled, the latter was pale and frightened-looking.

Then there came a knock on the door.

"Hello, in there!" called out a voice. "Hello, I say! Open the door!"

Dick signalled the two to maintain silence.

Then he quickly, yet noiselessly, climbed up a ladder at the side of the room, and was in the loft.

There was a small window in the side of the cabin.

Dick had noticed it when he first approached the cabin.

He looked out and down.

He had a very good view of the persons demanding admission.

They were redcoats, sure enough, and there were four of them.

They were talking earnestly and seemed to be puzzled on account of being refused admission.

One of them again knocked on the door.

"Open!" he cried. "What do you mean by keeping us waiting here after telling us to come?"

Dick quickly climbed back down the ladder.

He made no reply to the redcoat.

The man on the floor looked as if he would have liked to do so, but fear of Dick kept his mouth closed.

There was a brief silence, and then Dick, who stood close to the door, heard one of the redcoats say:

"Let's break the door down! There's something wrong in there."

"How will we manage it?" asked another.

"We'll get a battering-ram and knock the door down in a jiffy."

Dick now thought it time to say something.

"You fellows had better go away and mind your own business!" he cried. "You are not wanted in here!"

"Oho, they've come to life in there!" cried a voice.

"So they have!" from another.

Then in a louder voice the first speaker called out:

"You may not want us in there, but we want to go in there, just the same; and we are going to come in, too! You might as well open the door, for if you don't we will knock it down!"

"You will do so at your peril!" cried Dick.

"Oho! you threaten us, do you?"

"Well, we shall protect ourselves!"

"Who are 'we'?"

"You will find out if you break the door down! There are four of us in here."

"Four, eh?"

"Yes."

"We don't care how many there are of you; we are coming in, you may be sure of that!"

"And you will wish that you had not done so—you may be sure of that!"

"Bah! Get that log, yonder, boys; we'll smash in the door and see who this young gamecock is."

Dick hastened back up into the loft.

He opened the window a little ways.

Drawing a pistol, he cocked it and waited.

The redcoats had just picked up the log and were approaching the cabin.

As they drew near Dick thrust his arm through the opening, and, leveling the pistol, cried out:

"Stop! Drop that log or I will fire!"

The redcoats paused and uttered startled exclamations.

They looked up and saw the threatening weapon.

"Hello, there, what do you mean?" cried one of the redcoats. "Don't you dare fire that pistol!"

"Drop that log or I will fire!" cried Dick, sternly. "And I give you fair warning that I am a dead shot and shall shoot to kill!"

"Oh, come, now; you don't mean that," said one of the redcoats, insinuatingly.

"You start to advance with that log and you'll find out!" retorted Dick.

One of the redcoats said something in a low tone.

Then the four darted forward.

Doubtless they thought they would be able to get close in beside the cabin before Dick could fire.

They were mistaken.

Crack!

One of the redcoats gave utterance to a cry of pain and letting go of the log, fell to the ground.

Instantly the other three redcoats let go of the log and with cries of rage and consternation darted around the corner of the cabin.

The log, when let fall by the three redcoats, had rolled onto a leg of the wounded man and now held him pinioned to the ground.

The pain thus caused the poor fellow in addition to the wound which Dick had given him, must have been considerable.

At any rate he gave utterance to heartrending groans and cries for help.

Dick was disgusted with the action of the three redcoats.

"Come back, you cowards, and take the log off the leg of your comrade!" he cried.

"Oh, but we're not eager to be shot!" cried one of the redcoats from his vantage point behind the cabin.

"You ought to be shot for being such cowards," said Dick; "but I have a proposition to make to you. I'll tell you what I'll do. If you will agree to leave here and go

back to where you came from, I will agree to let you come to the aid of your comrade without firing upon you. What do you say?"

"All right; we'll do it. Don't you shoot at us, now."

"Don't be alarmed," replied Dick, in a scornful tone; "I'll not fire upon you. Hurry and take that log off the leg of your comrade."

The redcoats obeyed.

They appeared and lifted the log off the leg of the wounded man, but cast fearful glances over their shoulders as they did so.

It was evident that they were afraid the youth might fire upon them, after all.

Lifting their comrade, they carried him away and soon disappeared from sight among the trees.

Dick hastily climbed down the ladder and unbarred and opened the door.

Dick turned toward the ruffian seated on the floor.

"Remain right where you are till I come back," he said.

Then he left the cabin and made his way in the direction taken by the redcoats.

He had no difficulty in following them, and had the satisfaction of seeing them get into their boat and row away.

"Good!" he said. "I guess they won't bother us any more just at present."

Dick saw something else which pleased him.

About halfway from the island to the shore was a boat.

In it were the redcoats with whom he had had the encounter on the other island.

They had not thought of Dick playing them the trick that he had, and had rowed past the island and on toward the mainland.

"Well, there are two sets of redcoats disposed of for the time being," said Dick to himself. "Now, I will go back to the cabin and see what my new-found friends intend doing."

Dick hastened back to the cabin.

The three were still there.

The man was sitting on the floor, looking sullen and angry while the youth and the girl were gathering their belongings together.

"We are going to leave here," said the youth; "we will be ready in a few moments."

"Where will you go?" asked Dick.

"I don't know; it doesn't matter much. We are ready to go anywhere to get away from that man," nodding toward the ruffian.

"Very well; you may go with me."

"We shall be glad to do so."

In a few minutes the two had finished their work, and taking up their bundles, announced that they were ready to go.

Dick turned to the ruffian seated on the floor.

"Remain right where you are," he said, sternly. "Don't attempt to follow us; if you do so, and I catch sight of you, I will put a bullet through you. Do you understand?"

"Yes," the man mumbled; "I understand. I'm not going to try to follow you; I'm only too glad to get rid of the three of you."

Then he shook his fist at the youth and the girl.

"Don't you two dare come back here again; if you do, it will do you no good. This is no longer your home."

"You needn't be afraid; we won't come back," said the youth, scornfully. "We will never bother you again; and all we ask of you is that you do not bother us."

The three now left the cabin and made their way down to the water's edge.

Dick's boat was still where he had left it.

The three entered the boat and seated themselves.

Dick took the oars and heading the boat toward the shore, rowed with steady stroke.

Suddenly a cry escaped the girl.

"Look!" she exclaimed, pointing.

The youths looked in the direction indicated.

A boat had just shot out from the farther end of the island and was headed for the mainland.

The boat had but a single occupant—a man—and he was rowing lustily.

"It is Simon Snook!" exclaimed Jesse Winthrop.

"Yes; and he is going to try to reach the mainland ahead of us," said the girl.

"With the intention of warning the redcoats of our coming, and effecting our capture," said Dick.

"Such is evidently his intention," agreed Jesse.

"What shall we do?" asked the girl.

Dick rested on his oars and let the boat come to a stop.

He watched Simon Snook's boat for a few moments and then turned his eyes toward the mainland.

Suddenly he started.

"A boat filled with redcoats is just pushing off from the shore!" he exclaimed.

Dick looked all around and pondered a few moments.

"I think we shall be able to escape from the redcoats," he said. "The sun is just setting and it will be dark soon. We will row in the other direction, and as soon as it becomes dark we will turn, and, making a wide detour, will reach the mainland at a point two or three miles to the westward."

As Dick was speaking he turned the boat's head in the opposite direction and pulled back toward the island.

Instead of making a landing, however, he skirted the island until on the opposite side and then he pulled straight out into the lake.

He kept this up steadily for half an hour.

By this time it was quite dark.

It would have been impossible to see an object as large as a boat a distance of twenty yards.

Feeling confident that it would be safe to do so, Dick turned the boat's head toward the southwest as nearly as he could guess it and bent to the oars.

After an hour of steady work the mainland was reached.

As good luck would have it, Dick found a little landlocked cove where he thought the boat would be safe from observation.

"What will you two do now?" asked Dick when they were on the shore.

"We have some friends living five miles west of Orangeburg," said Jesse; "I guess we will go there."

"Do you think you can find the way?"

"Oh, yes; all we have to do is to go southward till we strike the road leading west from Orangeburg. Our friends live on that road."

"Good!" said Dick. "As I am bound for Orangeburg, I will accompany you till we reach that road, and then when you turn west I will turn east."

The three set out at once and walked steadily onward through the timber.

Being more familiar with the country than Dick, Jesse took the lead; behind him was his sister, while Dick brought up the rear.

Half an hour's walk brought the three to the road Jesse had spoken of.

The brother and sister thanked Dick earnestly for what he had done for them, but Dick laughed it off and said he had not done much.

Then he shook hands with both, and expressing the hope that they might meet again, bade them good-by and made his way down the road in the direction of Orangeburg.

Dick walked steadily onward for perhaps half an hour.

Then he paused on the top of a hill.

CHAPTER V.

A SOCIAL EVENT.

"Goodness!" exclaimed Jessie.

"What shall we do?" asked her brother.

In the distance he could see the light thrown up by the camp-fires of the British.

Dick judged that it was perhaps a mile to the encampment.

Dick set out once more and walked steadily onward till he had gone half a mile or so.

Then he slackened his pace.

He would have to proceed very cautiously.

He might come upon a British sentinel at any moment.

Then, too, the country was new to Dick, and for this reason it behooved him to move slowly and cautiously.

Suddenly Dick met with a surprise.

He rounded a bend in the road and found himself almost in front of quite a large house—almost a mansion, in fact—which stood but a short distance from the road.

The house was lighted up and the sounds of revelry came from within.

Dick paused.

"Hello! what have we here?" he exclaimed under his breath.

It did not take him long to interpret the affair, however.

This mansion was undoubtedly the home of a wealthy Tory who was giving a ball in honor of the British officers.

Dick stood still and pondered the situation.

He hardly knew what to do.

Finally, he decided to take a look in on the festivities.

He doubted not that the majority of the British officers were in the mansion.

By stopping here and doing a little spy work, he might learn something which would be of benefit to him.

With Dick, to decide was to act.

He left the road, and leaping the fence was in the yard.

The light shone out so brightly through the front windows of the mansion that Dick did not dare approach from the front.

He made a half-circuit and reached the house from the rear.

Dick peered in at one of the rear windows.

It was a kitchen window, and all he saw in there was several negro wenches.

Dick wasn't satisfied with this, so he moved around to the end of the house.

He approached a window and peered into the room beyond.

"Ah, this is more like it!" he murmured.

The room into which he was looking was a large one and there were a score or more of ladies and gentlemen, the majority of the latter being British officers, in the room.

An orchestra was discoursing music and quite a number were dancing.

It was a lively scene.

Under ordinary circumstances Dick would have been glad to look upon such a scene, but now his heart was filled with bitterness.

"What right had those British officers to be there, dancing and enjoying themselves?" was the question which Dick asked himself.

Suddenly Dick felt himself seized by strong hands.

"Aha! I have you now!" hissed a voice in Dick's ear.

CHAPTER VI.

A LIVELY TIME.

A sentinel had caught sight of Dick as he peered in at the window, and had slipped up behind the youth, with noiseless steps.

Owing to the fact that Dick's attention had been centred upon the scene within the room, the redcoat had been enabled to surprise the youth; but Dick soon evened up the score by giving the redcoat a surprise.

The instant he felt the grasp of the hand, Dick gave a fierce wrenching jerk and freed himself.

Then he whirled and attacked the redcoat in a fierce manner.

So surprised was the redcoat by Dick's sudden and unexpected action, that he forgot to yell; and by the time he thought of it, it was too late, for he was flat on his back on the ground, and Dick had him by the throat.

The yell which the redcoat then attempted to give utterance to was choked back and became but a gurgle in the throat.

The redcoat struggled fiercely.

He was a strong fellow and made a good fight.

But he was no match for Dick.

Dick had secured the deadly throat hold from which there was no escape.

In one minute's time the redcoat was insensible.

As Dick rose to his feet, a dog came rushing around the corner of the house and dashed straight toward him, barking furiously.

Dick realized that the barking of the dog would bring the officers out of the house to investigate.

He did not dare turn and run, however, as the dog could quickly overtake him, and, as it seemed to be a vicious brute, might succeed in pulling him down.

He must first attend to the dog and then take to flight afterward.

The musket belonging to the soldier who had attacked Dick lay on the ground near by, and seizing the weapon the youth swung it over his head and struck the dog a terrible blow.

The butt of the weapon struck the dog squarely on the head and the animal dropped in its tracks.

Dropping the musket Dick bounded away, across the yard.

As he did so the British officers came pouring out through the open doorway of the mansion.

The barking of the dog had been heard and they were coming out to see what the trouble was.

Dick had got about halfway across the yard when there came a flash and a loud report from right in front of him, and a bullet whistled past his left ear.

Dick had run upon another sentinel.

The next instant he was upon the fellow and knocked him down with a blow from his fist.

Onward he ran with all his might, the officers giving chase.

Dick reached the fence, leaped over it and dashed onward, down the road.

The redcoats, being officers, and not partial to hard work, gave up the pursuit at the yard fence and returned to the mansion.

They wished to enjoy themselves, and they did not think the fugitive one who amounted to much, anyway.

"Some country bumpkin who was sneaking around, doubtless," remarked one of the officers to another.

Had they known that the supposed "country bumpkin" was the famous scout and spy, Dick Slater, they would have thought differently.

But they didn't know it, and Dick was allowed to go on his way unmolested.

He thought it could not be much farther to Orangeburg.

He found that he was right in thinking thus.

It was only about a mile.

Dick reached the suburbs almost before he knew it.

He proceeded very cautiously.

He knew there would be sentinels posted at all the road and street entrances to the town, so he turned aside and made his way into the town by cutting across lots.

In this way he escaped the sentinels' notice.

He was soon in the heart of the town.

There were redcoats everywhere.

They were having a good time.

They were well aware of the fact that their officers were away, enjoying themselves, and they thought that it was only fair that they should do the same.

Hence the majority were drinking and carousing.

They were ripe for deviltry, and Dick soon discovered this.

One crowd of half a dozen or more redcoats, all half drunk, halted Dick and demanded to know who he was and what right he had to be on the street at that time of the night.

"This town b'longs t'us t'-nigh'," said one, "and you wan' t' get in somewhere out o' sight."

"Oh, is that so?" asked Dick. "I wasn't aware of the fact. I beg your pardon; I will go in out of sight at once. Good-night!"

He moved on down the street.

"Y' wan' t' hurry!" called out the redcoat. "Go faster than that!"

Dick did not wish to get into a difficulty with the redcoats, so he walked faster, and called back:

"How is that?"

"Not fas' enough," was the reply. "Run! Run, I say!"

To humor them, Dick broke into a run.

He knew he could turn a corner soon and get out of their sight.

When he reached the corner he darted around it—and right into the arms of another gang of partially intoxicated redcoats.

They seized Dick with shouts of glee.

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE HANDS OF THE REDCOATS.

"Aha! we have you now!" cried one.

"Why such unseemly haste?" from another.

"Stay, my gentle friend, stay!" mumbled a third.

Dick struggled to free himself.

There were eight or ten of the fellows, however, and even though they were partially intoxicated they were in the aggregate too strong for him, and he was forced to succumb.

"Oho, that is your game, is it?" one cried, when Dick began to struggle, and then they cuffed him at a great rate.

Dick saw that his struggling pleased the redcoats, as it gave them an excuse to thump him around, and this was the reason he ceased struggling so soon.

"I will have to give in for the present," he thought; "and I can keep my eyes open for a chance to escape later on."

Three or four of the redcoats held Dick while the rest stepped aside and conversed in low tones.

Dick's instinct told him that trouble was brewing.

The redcoats were ripe for any kind of mischief.

Presently the conversation came to an end and the redcoats returned to where Dick and his four guards stood.

"Bring him along," said one, and the party, with Dick in its midst, made its way up the street.

Presently they came to a saloon, which was down in a basement.

The redcoats entered, pulling Dick along with them.

They were in a large room.

It was a typical barroom of the period.

There was a bar at one side, and scattered about were little tables, around which were heavy chairs.

Perhaps a score of men were in the barroom.

They were, in the main, redcoats, and were seated at the tables, drinking, talking, laughing and telling stories.

The inmates stared when the party made its appearance with Dick in its midst.

"What have you there?" asked one man.

"What have we here?" cried one of the members of the party which had captured Dick. "Behold, we bring one who is famed as an entertainer! Gentlemen, this young man is a great speaker and singer, and he has agreed to entertain us. Prepare yourselves to enjoy a treat."

Dick understood.

The words of the redcoat explained what they intended doing.

They were going to have sport with the youth by making him sing, make speeches, etc.

Dick set his teeth.

"The scoundrels!" he said to himself. "I'd like to fool them."

He glanced around the barroom.

There was a door at the rear.

Of course, Dick did not know to what the door led, but he made up his mind to find out before permitting himself to be made furnish entertainment for a lot of half-drunken redcoats.

He would watch and wait, however, and not make a break until sure that he had a good chance to succeed.

The words of the redcoat excited the interest of the crowd.

"What's that?"

"You have a great entertainer there?"

"Who is he?"

"Where did you find him?"

"Hurrah! Now we'll have some sport!"

"Bring on your entertainer!"

"Can he dance as well as sing?"

Such were a few of the exclamations uttered by those within the barroom.

"Oh, yes; he's a fine dancer!" was the reply.

Then the redcoats hustled Dick across to the farther side of the barroom, and a table was hastily placed against the wall.

Then the leader of the redcoat band pushed Dick toward the table.

"Step up there, my gay young friend," he said, "and give us a specimen of your ability as an entertainer. If we like the specimen, we will order more; but if we don't like it we'll—well, you will find out!"

"Up with you!" came in a chorus from the crowd.

All were on the *qui vive* now.

They anticipated having some rare sport.

They understood that Dick had been picked up on the street, and that it was all a farce, and they were eager for the fun to begin.

Dick had not had anything to say, so far.

He had kept quiet and studied his surroundings.

He was determined not to allow himself to be made a laughing stock for the entertainment of the redcoats.

He was figuring on the best way to make the attempt to escape.

He decided that it would be best to throw the redcoats off their guard by making them think he was going to do just as they wished, and to this end, when the redcoats ordered him to mount the table, the youth obeyed.

His action was greeted with cheers from the crowd.

They were delighted and anticipated some rare sport.

Just as Dick took his place on the table, the front door of the barroom opened and four redcoats entered.

With them was a man in citizen's clothes, and Dick recognized him at a glance.

He was Simon Snook, the villainous stepfather of Jesse and Jessie Winthrop.

It was evident that Snook recognized Dick, also, for he said something to one of the redcoats, who looked at Dick and then cried out in a loud, excited voice:

"That is a rebel spy! Watch him, men, or he will get away from you. He is a slippery fellow!"

CHAPTER VIII.

DICK LEADS THE REDCOATS A CHASE.

The time had come for Dick to act.

He did not dare delay an instant.

The redcoats who had captured him had thought him a harmless youth, but now if they discovered that they had captured a rebel spy, they would wish to keep him a prisoner, so as to earn the praise of their superior officers.

As a cry of surprise went up from those within the barroom, Dick leaped down off the table and bounded toward the door at the rear.

A couple of the nearest redcoats leaped forward and tried to intercept Dick.

He knocked them down with two well-directed blows.

A wild roar of rage went up from the crowd.

The redcoats surged forward.

Many drew their pistols.

Dick reached the door and jerked it open.

He leaped through into the room beyond.

"After him!" yelled one of the redcoats. "Don't let him escape!"

There was the rush of many feet.

Dick realized that he would have to do some lively work if he were to escape.

The room into which he had leaped was small.

At the rear was a door.

Dick judged that this door opened out into the back yard.

He hoped so, at least.

Dick crossed the room almost at a single bound, and seizing the doorknob, pulled.

The door came open just as the pursuing redcoats burst into the room.

Out through the doorway leaped Dick.

His judgment had been correct; he was in the back yard.

He darted across the yard at the top of his speed.

Out through the doorway came the redcoats, and they started after Dick, pell-mell.

"Stop! stop!" was yelled. "Stop, or we will fire!"

"Fire, and be hanged to you!" murmured Dick. "If you think I am going to stop, you are badly fooled!"

He ran with all his might.

He came to a fence, and leaped over it at a single bound.

As he did so, "Crack! crack! crack!" went the pistols.

The redcoats were running, and did not try to take aim.

It would have been almost a miracle had a bullet hit Dick.

He had had a great deal of experience in this sort of thing, and knew the chances were not one in a hundred that he would be hit.

He escaped, this time.

Not a bullet struck him.

He turned and ran down the alley.

After him came the redcoats.

There were so many of the latter that they got in each

other's way, and several fell down and were trampled on by the rest.

They were not very steady on their legs, anyway, on account of the fact that they had been drinking more than was good for them.

Dick was a splendid runner, and as he had not been drinking, was at his best.

He had no difficulty in drawing away from his pursuers.

They soon realized that they were in a fair way to lose sight of the fugitive, and began a fusillade with their small arms.

They might as well have saved their ammunition.

Not one in twenty of the bullets went anywhere near Dick.

He turned down the first street he came to and had gone but a few paces when he was brought to a sudden halt by a voice which said:

"This way! Come in here!"

A man stood in the doorway of a house near by, and it was he who had uttered the words.

Dick leaped to the conclusion that the man was a friend, and without pausing to think, sprang forward; and as the man drew back into the hall of the house, Dick followed him.

The man closed the door and bolted it.

Then he brushed past Dick, saying, as he did so:

"Follow me!"

Dick obeyed, wondering what the adventure would terminate in.

The hall was very dimly lighted, so dimly, in fact, that Dick could not see the features of the man.

He would have to take things on trust, and wait to see whether or not he had fallen among friends.

So long as there was only one man, Dick did not think there was occasion for alarm.

He felt amply able to take care of himself.

The man led the way along the hall and up a flight of stairs.

The upper hall was no better lighted than the lower one.

The man led the way along this hall till he came almost to the end of it; then he threw open a door and motioned for Dick to enter.

Dick hesitated, but a glance into the room showed him that it was empty, save for the furniture.

"Have no fear," said the man. "Enter!"

Dick obeyed.

He walked across the room and turned, just as a number of candles blazed up into full flame, making it as light, almost, as day.

As Dick turned, a little cry of amazement escaped him.

The man stood with leveled pistols in his hands.

The pistols covered Dick.

There was a demoniacal smile of triumph on the man's face as he said:

"Curse you, Dick Slater! I have you in my power at last!"

CHAPTER IX.

AN OLD-TIME ENEMY.

"Maurice McMartin!" exclaimed Dick.

"The same. I am glad to know that you recognize me."

Nearly a year before, Dick, in order to the better play the role of a spy, had disguised himself as a country youth and joined the British army.

It happened that this fellow, Maurice McMartin, was a member of the regiment to which Dick had been assigned.

McMartin was a bully, and had taken the first opportunity to pick a fuss with Dick.

Of course, his thought was that he would have no difficulty in doing as he pleased with the youth, but he had soon learned his mistake.

Dick had given him a good thrashing, and did it with ease.

McMartin had then insisted that Dick should meet him with weapons.

To this Dick had agreed, and the result was that in the encounter which took place, McMartin was severely wounded.

He had sworn that he would have revenge.

He had registered an oath to do so before learning that the youth who had vanquished him was Dick Slater, the famous patriot, scout and spy, and when he did learn this, he did not change his mind.

If the opportunity ever came he would be revenged upon the youth.

And now it looked as if the opportunity had come.

He was alone with Dick, and with cocked and leveled pistols in his hands, apparently had the youth at his mercy. McMartin glared at Dick triumphantly.

The youth met the look, unflinchingly.

"Well," he said, "now that you have me here, what are you going to do?"

"What am I going to do?"

"Yes."

"You will soon find out."

"I will?"

"Yes."

"That is what I wish to do."

A sardonic smile appeared on McMartin's face.

"You'll change your mind, presently," he said.

"You think so?" asked Dick, calmly.

"I am sure of it."

Dick smiled, coldly.

"You must intend doing something terrible."

"Well—I'm going to have revenge on you for what you did a year ago."

"Permit me to say, McMartin, that doesn't speak well, for you," said Dick; "our fight, then, was fair and square, wasn't it?"

"Oh, yes, I suppose it was; but that doesn't matter. I am going to have revenge, anyway."

"Well, what are you going to do?"

Dick was playing for time.

He did not intend to let McMartin have things all his own way, if he could help it.

The first thing I am going to do is to draw your teeth," said McMartin. "In other words, I shall remove your weapons. Kindly oblige me by raising your hands above your head."

"Oh, that is what you wish me to do, is it?"

"Yes; and you had better do it quickly, too!"

McMartin shook the pistols, threateningly.

"Oh, well, anything to oblige you."

Dick raised his arms and held his hands above his head.

McMartin lowered the hammer of one of his pistols and thrust the weapon back into his belt.

Then he advanced toward Dick.

He advanced slowly and cautiously.

It was evident that he was suspicious of the youth.

"Now don't try any tricks," he said, warningly; "I know you of old and am on my guard and if you make any motion toward attacking me I will shoot you with as little compunction as if you were a dog."

Dick laughed in a scornful manner.

"Bah! McMartin, if I were as timid as you are I do not believe I should attempt to get revenge on any one. You must be badly frightened, for you are as pale as a ghost."

"You lie!" hissed McMartin. "I am not frightened, nor am I pale."

"If you could see your face in a mirror, McMartin, you would not say that," said Dick, with cutting sarcasm.

Dick knew with whom he was dealing.

He remembered that McMartin was a hot-blooded fellow, low, quick to become angry, and his object was to angle for the redcoat, in which event it would be easier to catch him off his guard.

"Curse you!" hissed McMartin. "I have a good mind to knock your head off!"

He drew back his fist as he spoke.

Unconsciously he let his other hand, in which was the pistol, drop almost to his side.

This was Dick's opportunity.

It was what he had been waiting for.

Quick as a flash Dick seized McMartin's left wrist with his right hand, and with his left he grasped the redcoat by the throat.

It was done so quickly that McMartin was unable to make a movement to prevent Dick from accomplishing his purpose.

McMartin began struggling violently, however.

Too late he realized that he had been victimized.

He understood now that it had been Dick's intention all along to anger him and throw him off his guard.

The knowledge made him furious.

He was almost insane with rage.

He fought like a demon.

In struggling to free his left arm, he pulled the trigger and the pistol was discharged.

In the small room the pistol shot sounded almost like that of a cannon.

"Jove! I'm afraid that will bring some one to McMartin's assistance," thought Dick.

He attacked McMartin more fiercely than ever.

He tightened his grip on the redcoat's throat.

He choked his opponent till the poor fellow's face turned black.

McMartin gasped and gurgled.

His struggles grew weaker and weaker.

A few moments later and his legs gave way beneath him and he sank to the floor unconscious.

At this instant Dick heard the sound of hurrying footsteps in the hall.

"The redcoats are coming!" thought Dick, in dismay. "I feared the sound of that pistol shot would bring them. What shall I do?"

CHAPTER X.

"REBEL NICK."

Dick gave one quick glance around him.

Then he leaped forward and bolted the door.

A moment later some one tried the knob.

This was followed by a loud rapping on the door.

"Open the door!" cried a voice. "What's going on in there, McMartin?"

Of course, Dick made no reply.

He was looking around for some means of escaping.

There was another door at the side of the room, and Dick hastened to this and opened it.

The room beyond looked like a sleeping-chamber.

Dick unhesitatingly stepped through the doorway and pulled the door shut after him.

As he did so there was a loud crashing sound.

The redcoats had burst the door open and were rushing into the room just left by Dick.

He had not escaped a moment too soon.

He heard loud exclamations.

"Look there!"

"McMartin is dead!"

"He has committed suicide!"

"How terrible!"

"I wonder why he did it?"

Such were a few of the exclamations.

Dick did not wait to hear more.

The redcoats would soon learn that McMartin had not committed suicide.

They would see that he had been choked into insensibility, and knowing that he would not thus choke himself, they would make a search for the person who had done the deed.

Dick tiptoed across the room and found another door.

He opened this and discovered that, as he had expected, it opened into the hall.

He looked out.

None of the redcoats were in sight.

They were in the adjoining room, close at hand, however.

At any moment they might come back out in the hall.

If Dick was to escape he must do it quickly.

He stepped out into the hall and made his way along it as rapidly as possible.

He walked on his tiptoes so as not to make any noise.

He had just reached the head of the stairs when a couple of redcoats emerged from the room where McMartin had been found.

They caught sight of Dick and gave utterance to a loud yell.

"Here he is!" cried one. "This way, fellows! We must not let him escape!"

He drew a pistol as he spoke, leveled it quickly, and fired.

Dick had anticipated this action, however, and was half-way down the stairs when the redcoat fired.

Of course, the bullet came nowhere near him.

There was the rush of feet.

The redcoats were coming in pursuit of Dick.

The youth reached the bottom of the stairs, and, turning, sped along the hallway toward the rear of the building.

Down the stairs clattered the redcoats.

Dick reached the rear end of the hall and tried the door.

It was locked.

The key was in the lock, however, and giving this a turn, and jerking the door open, Dick leaped through the doorway.

He landed in the back yard, and, stumbling, fell.

It was lucky for him that he did fall.

At this instant the redcoats fired a volley.

The bullets went over Dick, as he lay on the ground, but had he been erect he would have been riddled.

It was a close shave.

Dick was on his feet again in an instant.

He darted across the yard.

The redcoats came pouring out of the house.

They gave chase.

Dick was such a wonderfully fleet runner, however, that his pursuers did not have much chance of overtaking him.

They could only do so if something should happen to the fugitive.

Dick ran onward across a vacant lot.

After him, pell-mell, came the redcoats.

They were yelling at a great rate.

This did not worry Dick, however.

He continued onward at his best speed.

He was soon out at the edge of the town.

He continued onward into the country.

It was not very far to the timber, and Dick knew that if he got into the timber the redcoats could never overtake him.

The ground was uneven and Dick fell once or twice, but was not injured and was up and going again in an instant.

Soon he reached the timber, drew a breath of relief and slackened his speed.

After penetrating into the timber a distance of twenty or thirty yards, Dick paused.

He heard the pursuing redcoats stop when they reached the timber and begin talking among themselves.

"It would be folly to try to follow him any farther," Dick heard one fellow say; "we could not find him in that timber in a week's search."

"You're right," said another; "we may as well go back."

One or two were for entering the timber and trying to follow Dick, but the majority were against it and the majority ruled.

After a little further conversation the redcoats took their departure.

Dick remained where he was for a few minutes and pondered the situation.

What should he do?

Would it be safe for him to venture back into the town?

He feared that it would not.

After thinking the matter over he decided to push out into the country a ways and put up for the night at a farmhouse.

He proceeded to act upon this idea.

He made his way through the timber at a steady pace.

He had walked nearly half an hour when he caught sight of a light shining through the trees ahead of him.

Dick soon came out into a clearing.

"Now if I can get shelter here for the night I will be all right," thought Dick.

He advanced to the door of the cabin.

He knocked on the door.

"Who's thar?" called out a voice.

"A friend," replied Dick.

"Whut do yo' want?"

"I wish to stop with you over night."

"How many air thar uv yer?"

"One."

"Jes' one?"

"That's all; I am alone."

There was a fumbling at the door and Dick heard the bar come down.

Then the door was opened suddenly and a man was revealed standing in the doorway.

He held a pistol in his hand and peered out upon Dick in a suspicious manner.

As soon as he saw that Dick was alone he stepped aside saying:

"Come in, stranger."

Dick entered.

The man then closed the door and barred it.

He told Dick to be seated.

The youth obeyed.

The man took a seat near the youth.

"Yo' say yo' air travelni'?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Humph! Frum ther North, hain't yo'?"

"Yes, sir."

Dick had sized the man up and rather liked his look.

"Whut's yo' name?"

"Sam Harp."

"Sam Harp, hey? Waal, Sam, I s'pose yo' air er loy king's man?"

Dick was a close observer, and an unusually good judge of men.

He did not believe this man was a Tory.

He did not look, act or talk like one.

Still Dick knew it would be best to be cautious.

He laughed and said:

"Well, you see, I think it best to not say much about the matter. One never knows whom he may be talking to, you know, and he may get himself into trouble."

"Thet's so; but I don' make no bones erbout sayin' whut I want. All my nabors know ez how I'm er patriot ter ther core, an' w'ile they hev threatened whut they would do, they hain't never done nothin' yit. Thet's ther reezon I wuz keerful ter fin' out how menny ther wuz along uv yo' afore I opened ther door. I thort et mought be some uv my Tory nabors."

"Ah, I see."

"Ef they sh'd come, I'd make et warm fur 'em!"

"I don't doubt it," said Dick; "and so you are a patriot?"

"Yas, I am thet!"

"I'm glad to know it."

The man looked at Dick, keenly.

"Yo' air?" he queried.

"Yes."

"Then yo' air er patriot, too?"

"Since you have been so frank as to acknowledge that you are one, I will do the same. I am a patriot."

"An' er sojer, too, I'll bet!"

Dick nodded.

"Yes, I am a soldier."

"Frum Ginerel Greene's army?"

"Yes."

"I thort so; an' whut air yo' doin' down heer?"

"Trying to find out what the redcoats are doing, or intend doing, so that General Greene may know what to do."

"I see; yo' air er spy!"

"Yes."

"An' is yo' name Sam Harp, ez yo' said?"

"No; my name is Slater—Dick Slater."

"Whut!"

The man was excited.

"D'yo' mean ter say ez how yo' air Dick Slater?" he cried.

"Say, I've heerd tell uv yo' lots uv times!"

Dick smiled.

"Have you?"

"Yas; an' I'm glad ter know yo'. I am, fur er fack!"

He extended his hand, which Dick grasped.

"Dick Slater, ther great scout an' spy!—waal, waal!"

The settler was evidently greatly surprised and pleased.

"And now, tell me your name," said Dick. "I wish to

know a man who has the courage to declare himself in these troublous times."

"My name is Nick Slane—'Rebel Nick,' mos' uv my nabors calls me."

"I'm glad to know you, Mr. Slane."

"Call me Nick."

"Well, then, I am glad to know you, Nick."

"Yo' bet I am glad ter know yo', Dick!"

Then Nick suddenly made a cautioning gesture.

"Listen!" he half whispered.

Both listened.

The sound of footsteps could be plainly heard.

Then there came a knock on the door.

CHAPTER XI.

A NOVEL DISGUISE.

The two looked at each other, inquiringly.

Who could the men outside—for there was more than one—be? was the question which they asked thus mutely.

Both maintained absolute silence.

Presently there was another knock on the door, this time louder than before.

Nick Slane sat still and waited.

A few moments later there was another knock and a harsh voice called out:

"Hello, in thar!—hello!"

Nick leaned over and whispered to Dick:

"I know thet voice. Et berlongs ter ther biggest scoun'rel this side uv sundown. He's er nabor uv mine, er Tory by ther name uv Mike Muggins."

"Then the men out there are Tories," said Dick.

"They sartinly air, an' I guess ez how they hev come ter giv' me er goin' over fur bein' er patriot."

"Hello, in thar, I say!" roared the voice. "Open ther door, Nick Slane! We want. er tork ter yo'."

This was followed by a kick on the door.

"Wal, whut d'yo' want, Mike Muggins?" asked Nick.

"Oho, come ter life, hev yo'?" was the sneering reply. "I tole yo' I wanted yo' ter open ther door. I hev somethin' ter say ter yo'."

"Yo' kin say et ez well with ther door shet ez open, Mike Muggins," was the reply; "out with et."

"But I wants ter see yo'."

"Waal, yo' kain't do et, an' thet's all thar is erbout et. Ef yo' want. er say ennythin' ter me, yo'll hev ter do et without seein' me."

"Yo' air er coward, Nick Slane!"

"Yo' air er liar, Mike Muggins!"

"Whut's thet! D'yo' dar' ter call me er liar?" cried Muggins, evidently in a rage at being thus addressed.

"Thet's jes' whut yo' air, er liar, ef yo' say I'm er coward, Mike Muggins," said Nick; "an' ef et wuzn't thet yo' hev er gang out thar, I'd come out an' giv' yo' ther worst thrashin' yo' ever hed in all yo' life!"

"Thar hain't no gang out heer."

"Thar is, an' I know et!"

"Waal, come out an' giv' me thet thrashin', ennyway; I giv' yo' my word thet nobuddy'll do er thing ter he'p me."

"Bah! Yo' word hain't no good, Mike Muggins! Yo' kain't fool me in enny sech way ez thet."

"All right, ef yo' wanter hev et thet way; but yo' mought ez well open ther door, fur ef yo' don', we air goin' ter smash et down!"

"Listen ter me, Mike Muggins," called out Nick: "Ef yo' dar' ter break down ther door, et'll be ther worst thing yo' ever don' in yo' life; fur I'll do some shootin', an' I'll shoot ter kill!"

"Bah! whut kin yo', on'y one man, do erg'in' er duzzin?"

"Yo'll fin' thet thar is more than one man in heer, ef yo' try enny tricks, Mike Muggins. Ef yo' know when yo' air well off yo'll go right erway erbout yer bizness."

"Yo' air lyin'; thar hain't more than one in thar."

"Speek ter 'im, Dick," said Nick, in a low tone; "he'll see thet he is mistaken, then."

"You are mistaken if you think there is only one man in here, friend Mike," said Dick, in a loud voice; "there are several of us, and if you try any tricks you will wish that you hadn't!"

Dick's voice and manner of speaking were so different from those of Nick that the men outside could not help realizing that there was at least one stranger in the house.

The two could hear a confused murmur of voices for a few moments after Dick had spoken.

Evidently the Tories were discussing the situation.

Presently there was a thump against the door as if some one had kicked it.

"Hello, hello!" called the voice of Muggins.

"Hello, yo'self!" retorted Nick.

"Air yo' goin' ter open ther door?"

"I mos' sartinly hain't ergoin' ter do ennythin' uv ther kin'."

"Yo'd better!"

"I guess not!"

"We'll knock ther door down, ef yo' don'."

"Try et; an' ef yo' do, we'll fill yo' full uv lead!"

Angry exclamations escaped the lips of the Tories.

There was a few moments of silence, and then, crash! something came against the door.

Dick and Nick leaped to their feet and drew pistols.

"Let's give them a few shots through the door," said Dick.

"All right; heer we go!"

Both leveled their pistols and fired.

Crack! crack!

The reports sounded almost together.

Then on the air rose a terrible howl of pain.

"We hit somebuddy!" said Nick, with an air of satisfaction.

"I hope it was Mike," said Dick.

Then he took hold of Nick's arm and pulled him to one side, out of range of the door.

"They will likely fire a volley," he said.

This proved to be just what they did do.

There was a crashing roar, being the sound made by at least a dozen weapons.

A dozen bullets came crashing through the door.

But for Dick's forethought both might have been severely wounded, even killed.

As it was, they were not injured, as the bullets did not come anywhere near them.

Dick and Nick had drawn each another pistol, and now they leaped around in front of the door and fired through it again.

Another howl went up, proving that one of the bullets had taken effect.

And again the two leaped aside, out of range.

As before, they were just in time.

The Tories fired another volley.

Of course, it did no damage.

"Yo' fellers hed better giv' et up an' go home," called out Nick; "yo' couldn't hurt us in er week."

There was a confused murmuring outside, and presently a voice called out:

"We're goin' now, Nick Slane; but we'll be be back ergin, one uv these nights, an' then et'll go hard with yo'!"

"I'll be ready fur yo'!" replied Nick; "good-by!"

"Thet wuzn't Mike's voice," he added, after a moment; "so I guess we mus' hev hit 'im one uv ther times."

"I judge you are right," agreed Dick.

They listened, and heard the footsteps of the Tories as they moved away.

"I guess they won't bother us enny more ter-night," said Nick; "so we mought ez well go ter bed."

He spread a couple of blankets on the floor at one side of the room, and asked Dick how that would do.

Dick said it would do splendidly.

Nick bade Dick good-night, and went into the other room, and Dick blew out the light, and throwing himself down upon the blankets, was soon asleep.

Next morning Dick made the acquaintance of Mrs. Slane, Nick's wife.

She was a good-natured, lively, but philosophical woman, and said that she had known all that occurred during the encounter with the Tories, but had remained in her room, as she felt sure that Nick and Dick could more than hold their own.

"Ef it hed be'n necessary, I would hev come out an' helped yo' fight, though!" she declared.

"An' she would, too, Dick!" affirmed Nick, proudly.

After breakfast Nick asked Dick what he intended doing.

"I wish to enter Orangeburg, and try to secure some information," was the reply; "but I hardly know whether to risk it or not. If I could go into the place in disguise I would be all right, but I have no disguise."

"Me'n ther ole woman air goin' inter town, this mornin'," said Nick; "we air goin' ter take er load uv garden truck in ter sell ter ther sojers. Yo' mought go erlong uv us, but I'm erfraid ther redcoats would be s'pishous uv yo'."

Suddenly an idea struck Dick.

"Say, I have a scheme!" he cried. "Let me dress up in one of your old dresses, Mrs. Slane, and go in your place!"

"Ther very thing!" cried Nick, slapping Dick on the shoulder. "Thet is jes' ther thing, an' no mistake. Molly allers w'ars er sun-bunnit, an' nobuddy kin see her face; an' so they won't diskiver thet et hain't Molly thet is with me."

Molly thought it a good idea, and brought out an old dress and a sun-bonnet, and handed them to Dick.

He retired to the other room and quickly donned the dress over the top of his clothes; then he put the bonnet on and went back into the other room.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Slane complimented Dick, and said the disguise was perfect.

"They'll never know et hain't ther ole woman!" declared Nick.

Mrs. Slane said the same.

Half an hour later, seated on the seat of the rickety farm-wagon beside Nick, looking for all the world like Mrs. Slane, Dick rode away in the direction of Orangeburg.

CHAPTER XII.

THE REDCOATS ARE AMAZED.

By wagon road it was about two miles to Orangeburg.

It took the one horse more than an hour to pull the wagon to the town.

The wagon was well filled with vegetables and other produce, and Nick stopped near the centre of the town and began selling the stuff to the British soldiers, and others who wished to buy.

Dick had posted Nick, and told him what questions to ask, and the man did his work well.

Every time he sold something to a soldier he would ask him something which was calculated to elicit information.

He asked it in a jocular way, and the redcoats, not suspecting that the supposed woman seated beside the farmer was the noted patriot spy, Dick Slater, answered Nick's questions freely.

Dick, as may be supposed, made careful note of everything the redcoats said.

By the time the load of vegetables and produce of all kinds had been disposed of, he had gained a great deal of valuable information.

Just as they were about to start to leave the town a party of redcoats approached the wagon.

They had been drinking, and were singing a maudlin chorus.

"Hullo!" cried the leader of the party, as they paused at the side of the wagon. "What have you got to sell, old man?"

"Nothin' now," replied Nick; "ever'thin' is sold out."

"Say, that's a shame! We wanted some eggs and vegetables, didn't we, boys?"

His comrades, thus appealed to, said that they wanted some eggs and vegetables very badly, indeed.

"Sorry, but I hev'n't er thing left, boys," said Nick, and he clucked to his horse.

"Hold on!" cried the leader of the redcoats. "I think you haven't treated us just right in this matter, and now to make things right, your wife must give each of us a kiss!"

"I'll kiss nary a one uv yo'!" cried Dick, imitating Mrs. Slane's voice as nearly as possible. "Drive on, Nick!"

"Don't you do it, Nick!" cried the redecoat. "You are not going till after your wife has given each of us a kiss, and maybe that will teach you not to sell all your produce before we get a chance at it, next time. I'll take the first kiss!"

The redecoat placed his foot on the hub of the wagon and reached up to pull the sun-bonnet off Dick's head.

The next instant the redecoat lay at full length on the ground, knocked there by a vigorous cuff from Dick's hand.

Cries of amazement went up from the fellow's comrades.

This was the most astonishing thing they had ever seen.

The idea of one of the soldiers of the king being knocked down by a woman!

It was indeed amazing.

"Great Jupiter!"

"What a hand the woman has!"

"She is an Amazon, sure enough!"

"I'll warrant Willard's ears will ring for a week!"

Such were a few of the exclamations indulged in.

"Gid-dap!" cried Mr. Slane, anxious to get away and avoid further trouble.

But Willard leaped to his feet, and grasping the horse's bit set the animal back.

Then he rushed forward, shaking his fist at the supposed woman.

"You she-fiend!" he cried. "If you were a man I would give you the worst thrashing you ever had!"

"Yo' kain't do et, even though I'm er woman!" cried the supposed Mrs. Slane; "I kin whup yo' in er fa'r fight, an' I'll do et, too, ef yo' bother us enny more!"

"There's spunk for you!" cried one of the redcoats.

"By Jove! I believe she would give Willard a good tussle!" from another.

Willard hardly knew what to think.

He stared at Dick with underjaw dropped.

"You don't mean it?" he gasped.

"Uv course I mean et; but I think thet yo' hed better let us go our way in peace. Why sh'd yo' pick er fuss with us? We'll be back with another load uv stuff, this artemnoon, an' yo' kin git some eggs an' vegertables, then."

The redcoat studied a few moments, and then he said:

"I'll tell you what I'll do: If you will give me the kiss, I will let you go and will not bother you any more."

"An' ef I won't do thet?"

"Then I'm going to take the kiss by force, if necessary!"

"Yo' better not try et!" warned Dick.

"Give me the kiss!"

The redcoat placed his foot on the hub, once more.

"Keep erway!" warned Dick.

But the redcoat was angry, and was not to be kept from his purpose by threats.

He reached up and attempted to pull Dick's head down within reach, so that he might get the coveted kiss.

He got something other than what he was expecting, this time, for suddenly Dick's fist shot out.

It landed fair between the redcoat's eyes.

He went flying backward and struck the ground with a thump.

Exclamations of amazement escaped his comrades.

This was a wonderful woman, indeed!

So they thought, and they put their thoughts in words, by making remarks, as they had done before.

Dick now proceeded to climb down out of the wagon.

"Jes' yo' set thar, Nick, an' hol' ther hoss," he said, in an authoritative tone of voice, "this heer feller needs er good lesson, an' I'm ergoin' ter giv' et ter 'im afore I goes erway frum heer, then ther' won't be nobuddy want ter bother me no more arterward."

Then Dick turned to the other redcoats.

"Will yo' stan' back an' not he'p 'im?" she asked.

"Of course we will stand back!" was the chorus. "We won't do a thing, and if Willard gets the worst of it we shall not care."

"All right, then; I'll giv' this heer feller er good thrash-in'!"

Willard was scrambling to his feet, now, and all watched the scene with eager eyes.

Perhaps no one was more interested than was Nick Slane.

He was amused, and at the same time he was afraid the secret of Dick's identity might be discovered.

As regarded the coming encounter, he had no fears for its outcome.

He had heard of Dick Slater, and knew what he could do; or, at least, he had heard that the youth was a wonderful fighter with fists or with weapons.

He believed the redcoat was going to get a good thrashing.

The redcoat's comrades hardly knew what to think.

They had already seen that the supposed woman had a heavy hand, but they thought it hardly possible that she would be able to more than hold her own with the man in a real fight.

Truth to tell, when he rose to his feet and rushed at the supposed woman, they felt ashamed of him.

Their feelings soon changed to wonder, however, for to their amazement the supposed woman stood up before Willard and gave him blow for blow.

She warded off the redcoat's blows in a wonderful manner, and finally knocked the fellow down with a terrific right-hand blow over the heart.

The blow rendered the redcoat unconscious, and with a nod of the head and a wave of the hand, Dick climbed into the wagon.

"I guess yo' uns 'll let me erlone arter this," Dick said.

"I guess you are right about that!" one of the redcoats replied, and they made no attempt to hinder Nick when he drove away.

It was several minutes before the insensible man came to, and when he realized that he had been thrashed, and by (as he supposed) a woman, he was nearly ready to die for shame.

He scrambled to his feet and strode away, muttering to himself in a disgusted manner.

The others made their way back to their quarters, discussing the affair, and the story of how Willard had been thrashed by the woman was soon known throughout the camp.

Everywhere Willard went he met with ridicule, and he felt like going off and committing suicide.

When Dick and Nick were out of the town, both laughed heartily.

"Thet's ther bes' joke I ever heerd tell uv!" laughed Nick.

"I guess that redcoat was a bit surprised," smiled Dick.

"S'prised?—he won't never be able fur ter hol' up his head in ther army erg'in. His comrades 'll make life er misery fur 'im."

"I judge that you are right about that," agreed Dick, who knew something about such matters.

The two reached the cabin without further adventure, and when they had unhitched, put the horse in the stable and entered the cabin, Nick told his wife how she had thrashed a British soldier—by proxy.

Mrs. Slane laughed heartily.

She thought it a good joke.

"An' I will haf ter fight ther redcoats whenever I go inter town, frum now on?" she asked.

"I hardly think so," said Dick; "I judge that there will not be any more who will wish to try conclusions with you."

Dick remained at the cabin the rest of the day, and after supper, bade Mr. and Mrs. Slane good-by, and took his departure.

CHAPTER XIII.

LEFT TO SWIM OR DROWN.

Dick had secured as much information as he had expected to secure when he came to Orangeburg, and now he was ready to return to the American encampment on the hills of the Santee.

Dick did not wish to risk going through Orangeburg, so he made a wide detour and went around the town.

He was headed for the point where he had left his boat the night before.

Dick was a good woodsman so did not have much trouble in finding his way.

It took him more than two hours to reach the spot where he had left the boat.

He had feared that he might not find the boat there, but his fears were groundless.

The boat was safe and right where he had left it.

"Good!" said Dick, in a tone of satisfaction. "Now I am all right."

Pulling the boat close to the shore, Dick stepped into it.

As he did so, something squirmed under his feet and a wild yell rent the night air.

Some one had been lying in the boat and Dick had stepped upon him.

Naturally, Dick was startled.

Of course, he could not tell whether the person was a friend or foe.

Dick quickly made up his mind that the fellow was not a friend.

He found himself attacked fiercely.

The man, whoever he was, seized Dick by the legs and threw him.

Dick went over the side of the boat, but was so close to the shore that he struck on the ground and not in the water.

The man followed up his advantage by leaping on top of Dick.

He tried to get hold of Dick's throat, with the evident intention of throttling him.

Dick, however, had no intention of permitting this.

He struggled fiercely and presently succeeded in turning his opponent and getting on top of him.

Dick now had the best of the struggle.

He succeeded in getting hold of the fellow's throat.

He was giving the man a good choking when he heard the sound of rushing feet and crackling underbrush.

Somebody was coming.

Indeed, Dick thought there must be several persons, judging by the noise made.

That they were enemies, he did not doubt.

He had no reason to expect that they would be friends.

He must get away before they reached the spot.

Releasing his hold, Dick rose to his feet quickly, and leaping into the boat, cut the painter and pushed off.

The fellow with whom Dick had just been struggling, gasped and sputtered and then called out:

"This way, boys! Hurry up or you won't catch him. He is making off in the boat!"

Dick had seated himself, seized the oars and was now rowing rapidly out into the lake.

He heard excited voices on the shore which he had just left.

"Jove! that was a close shave!" thought Dick. "Undoubtedly those fellows are redcoats. They found the boat and expected to bag the owner when he put in an appearance.

"Well, if they had all been on hand when that fellow

grabbed me, they would undoubtedly have succeeded in making me a prisoner."

Dick rowed straight on out into the lake.

He rowed leisurely as he thought his enemies had no means of following him.

He continued to hear the voices with considerable distinctness, however, and presently he heard the splash of oars.

"Jove! they have a boat and are following me!" thought Dick. "I will have to row my best if I am to leave them behind."

Dick bent to the oars and rowed swiftly for perhaps ten minutes.

Then the boat began to move sluggishly.

Dick wondered what was the matter.

It took all his strength on the oars to force the boat through the water.

Suddenly a thought struck Dick.

He felt down in the bottom of the boat.

It was a third full of water.

The boat had sprung a bad leak.

Dick did not believe the boat would stay on top of the water very much longer, but he kept on rowing.

Presently the boat sank and Dick was left to swim or drown.

CHAPTER XIV.

DICK SECURES ANOTHER BOAT.

Dick was a good swimmer.

No one could be more expert in the water than was he.

So he had no fear of drowning.

The boat containing the pursuing redcoats was not far away, however, and he was in some danger of being discovered and captured.

Dick struck out, going in a direction at right angles with the course he had been going in the boat.

He wished to get out of the line of progress of the other boat.

Water is a good conductor of sound, and Dick could hear the oars plainly.

He could hear the voices of the redcoats, too.

He swam steadily onward.

Presently he glanced around in the direction he was going.

In the distance he saw a light.

Dick decided to swim toward the light.

Where the light was, must be land.

After thinking the matter over, he decided that the light was probably on an island, of which there were quite a number in the vicinity.

Onward he swam.

It was no easy task to force his way through the water, wearing clothing which was soaked full of water.

It is quite a different matter to swim with clothes on from swimming without this encumbrance.

Still Dick had a great deal of experience in this kind of work, and was able to keep moving onward.

Fifteen minutes of this kind of work, and Dick was close to the shore of what was evidently an island.

On the shore was a lantern, and the youth could see men moving about.

"Whoever they are, they are not friends to me," thought Dick, "so I must be careful. I will swim farther along the shore before making a landing, and I can then investigate the gentlemen at my leisure."

Dick turned and swam slowly and silently along, parallel with the shore.

He proceeded a hundred yards or so, and then headed in to the shore.

He made a landing, and waiting only long enough to wring the water out of his clothes as well as he could, Dick made his way in the direction of the point where the men had been seen.

The youth was soon close to the place where the men were at work.

It did not take him long to see what was going on.

The men were placing articles in a boat which was pulled up on the sand.

They were talking as they worked.

Dick could understand what was said.

"If the rebels can send spies down here, we can go up there," said one; "it is a poor rule that won't work both ways."

"You are right," agreed another; "we will fight fire with fire, and will beat them at their own game."

Dick understood it all.

Some of these men were going to embark in the boat and cross the lake for the purpose of spying upon the patriots.

They were going to make the boat their headquarters, and were stocking it with provisions, etc.

Dick began doing some rapid thinking.

If he could manage to in some way get the boat away from the redcoats, he would be doing a double stroke of work, for he would thus have the means of getting back across the lake, and would defeat the purpose of the redcoats at the same time.

But could he succeed in doing this?

There were four of the men, and this was rather large for even Dick Slater.

Had his weapons been in working order he would not have had much fear regarding the result of the attempt on his part, but his pistols were soaked with water, and would not be of any use to him, save as missiles to shy at the redcoats' heads.

Still Dick was determined to make the attempt to capture the boat if there was any chance at all of making a success of the effort.

He discovered that the provisions were being carried in a cabin back in the woods.

Suddenly Dick realized where he was.

He was on the island on which was the cabin of the Indian, Simon Snook, the step-father of Jesse and Jessie Anthrop.

It was Snook's cabin that the provisions were being brought from.

Then one of the four men must be Snook.

This made Dick more eager than ever to put his plan through to a successful issue.

He would be glad to do anything to defeat the plans of the scoundrels.

Presently Dick's chance came.

Two of the four men went back to the cabin to get a load of provisions.

This left only two at the boat.

Dick believed he could put two men to flight.

By taking them by surprise he might be able to succeed in frightening them away, at least long enough for him to push the boat off, leap in and row away.

Dick decided to make the attempt, at any rate.

He suddenly rushed forward.

His feet did not make much noise on account of the sand.

He was almost upon the two men before they knew any thing was coming.

They whirled when Dick was twenty feet distant, and he gave a wild, blood-curdling yell and leaped toward them.

The redcoats were startled.

"Come on, boys; we have them now!" shrieked Dick.

The result was all that Dick could have desired.

The redcoats, yielding to a sudden impulse, turned and

so frightened were they that they gave utterance to yells of fear.

Dick lost no time.

He realized that the fright of the redcoats would be only a temporary

He untied the painter, pushed the boat into the water, and leaping into the boat, seized the oars.

The redcoats had already stopped and faced about.

They suddenly realized that they had acted very foolishly.

They saw that there was only one person to contend with, and they saw further that the one person had gotten into the boat and was starting to row away.

They realized that they had been made the victims of a trick.

They became very angry and their courage returned as if by magic.

They came rushing back toward the point where the boat had rested.

"Stop!" they yelled. "Stop, or we will fire!"

Of course, Dick did not stop.

He would have risked the fire from a regiment before he would have done so.

Certainly the threat from two redcoats that they would fire had no effect.

Dick kept on rowing.

He rowed harder than ever, in fact.

The redcoats kept their word.

Crack! crack!

CHAPTER XV.

DICK ESCAPES.

The redcoats had fired.

One of the bullets whistled past Dick's ear.

The other struck one of the oars and knocked it out of the youth's hand.

He grabbed it again, however, before it got out of reach.

Then he went ahead, rowing at his best speed.

The redcoats yelled to him to stop, and drawing their other pistols, fired again.

The bullets went entirely wild, this time.

The two redcoats who had gone to the cabin for the last load of provisions came running back down to the shore, eager to learn what it was all about, and when they had learned, they were wild with rage.

They, too, drew their pistols and blazed away; but as Dick was now out of range of the light thrown out by the lantern, they had to fire entirely by guess, and did no damage.

Realizing that they were helpless, the redcoats danced

wildly about on the shore, and anathematized the unknown individual who had made off with their boat.

Who could the fellow be?

They asked this question of one another, and Simon Snook gave it as his belief that it was the spy who had been at his cabin the night before.

The others coincided with this view of the case.

They were very angry, but could do nothing, for they had no boat.

In fact, they were prisoners on the island until such time as some one should come with a boat and take them off.

Worst of all, their great spying expedition to the patriot camp had been nipped in the bud, so to speak.

They would have to put it off indefinitely.

They still had some food and liquor left in the cabin, however, and they made their way slowly to the cabin and sampled some of the liquor.

Meanwhile, Dick rowed steadily onward.

After rounding the west end of the island he headed toward the north.

He had not gone far when he heard voices.

He paused, and, resting on the oars, listened.

He heard voices plainly, and the sound of oars rattling in the rowlocks.

Dick knew what this meant.

It was the boatload of redcoats who had pursued him from the mainland in the first place.

They had given up the pursuit and were now headed toward the island, the firing of the pistols of the redcoats having attracted their attention, doubtless.

At least this was the way Dick figured it.

He must avoid this boat, if possible.

At the present moment it was coming straight toward him.

At least so he judged, from the sound.

Dick began rowing very gently.

He headed his boat in such a direction as would take him out of the way of the approaching redcoats.

Suddenly Dick heard one of the redcoats cry out:

"I hear oars!"

One of Dick's oars made considerable noise, the lock being too large, and it was impossible to keep from making noise in rowing.

Dick instantly ceased rowing.

All was silence.

The redcoats had ceased rowing, too, and were listening for the sound their comrade said he had heard.

After a few moments another voice was heard:

"You must have been mistaken, Harding. I don't hear anything."

"I heard it, just the same!" was the reply, in a dogged tone. "Whoever it was, has ceased rowing and is waiting for us to go on."

This was the case, but the other redcoats in the boat did not seem to have much faith in their comrade's statement.

"Go ahead with your rowing," ordered one; "we must get over to the island and see what that firing was about."

Dick heard the sound of the oars, and then he, too, began rowing.

He was as careful as he could be, for he knew the redcoat who had said he had heard oars would be listening intently, in the hope that he might again hear the sound and prove his words true.

"There; I hear oars again!" suddenly cried a voice.

Dick instantly ceased rowing.

The other boat was not far away, but was invisible, as the night was quite dark.

The redcoats ceased rowing.

There was a silence of a minute or so, and then again the redcoat who seemed to be in command said, growlingly:

"You didn't hear anything. Row, men, and don't stop till we reach the island."

The redcoat did not dare reply, and the sound of oars rattling in the locks was again heard.

Feeling that he was safe in doing so, Dick began rowing.

He kept it up steadily, and when he could no longer hear the sound of the redcoats' oars he bent to the work and rowed hard and fast.

He knew that the other boat would soon reach the island, and feared that as soon as the inmates learned what had occurred they might set out in pursuit of him.

If they did do this, he never knew it, for he heard no more from them, and kept on his way undisturbed for more than an hour.

Then he paused and rested ten or fifteen minutes, after which he continued on his way.

Dick congratulated himself on his good luck.

He had come out all right.

He had secured considerable in the way of information, and had escaped the redcoats, and was now in a fair way to get back to the patriot encampment in safety.

He rowed with strong strokes.

Onward he went.

He reached the north shore of the lake at about three o'clock.

He tied the boat, and, leaping ashore, made his way to the patriot encampment and to his quarters and to bed.

CHAPTER XVI.

AN ENGAGEMENT.

Immediately after breakfast, next morning, Dick went to the tent occupied by General Greene, and made his report.

When General Greene had heard all, he complimented Dick on his work.

"You did well, indeed, Dick!" he said; "I think that I know just about what to expect from the British, now, and shall govern myself accordingly."

"I am glad you are pleased, sir," said Dick, modestly.

"I am more than pleased; I am delighted. I will say, Dick, that there are, indeed, few who would take the chances that you take, in order to secure information. You have been of more benefit to the great cause than many a regiment."

Dick was emboldened to make a request which he had had in his mind for some time.

He—and, in fact, all the "Liberty Boys"—was averse to remaining quietly in camp.

The youths were young and enthusiastic, and they were never so happy as when out doing something.

He was aware that General Greene intended remaining in camp for some time, in order to give the men time to rest, and he did not wish to be cooped up, doing nothing.

He had made up his mind to ask the general to let him take his company of "Liberty Boys" and go around and keep a watch on the redcoats.

Dick made the request.

General Greene hesitated, but finally gave his permission.

Dick thanked him, earnestly, and hastened away to tell the youths of his success.

The "Liberty Boys" were delighted.

They gave utterance to cheers and began making preparations to break camp at once.

By noon they were ready, and immediately after dinner they rode away.

Of course, they had to go the roundabout way, a distance of seventy miles.

They rode about thirty miles before dark, and then camped beside a stream.

They were up bright and early next morning, and made such good time that they were as near Orangeburg as they thought it safe to venture by three o'clock.

The "Liberty Boys" spent the rest of the afternoon looking for a good place for a camp.

Dick wished to find a place that would serve as a sort of hiding place, or retreat, to which they might retire and feel reasonably safe.

He succeeded in finding just the place, finally.

It was in a little horseshoe-shaped valley, halfway up the side of a timber-covered hill about three miles from Orangeburg.

The entrance to the valley, which was not more than a quarter of a mile in width, was a narrow defile, a hundred yards long.

The defile was fifty feet deep and not more than ten feet wide.

A small party could hold an army at bay, if the army should attempt to come through the defile.

As they would likely be here for a month or more, Dick and his "Liberty Boys" proceeded to make themselves sure of living in comfort.

They had brought axes along, and trees were chopped down and a couple of good-sized log houses were built.

This, of course, took the youths a couple of days.

When the work was completed, they felt that they were ready for a campaign against the redcoats.

Of course, there being only one hundred of them, while they would be in close proximity to the entire British army, they would have to be very careful and try to get at small parties of the redcoats.

There would be foraging parties of the British, and it was for such parties that they would be on the watch.

On the morning of the third day, after reaching the vicinity of Orangeburg, the "Liberty Boys" mounted their horses and rode away to seek for the enemy.

Dick left ten of the youths behind to keep watch over things at the camp.

They did not encounter any redcoats that morning, so they secured some provisions at farmhouses, which were the homes of people who showed Tory tendencies, and returned to camp.

They ate dinner, waited an hour, and, mounting, started out again.

They had gone about three miles, when, on rounding a bend in a road through the timber, they came face to face with a party of redcoats.

It was quite a large party.

It looked as if there were two hundred and fifty to three hundred of the redcoats.

Dick's first impulse was to order a charge.

On second thought, however, he decided not to do so.

The redcoats were on foot and had muskets, and it would be a very serious matter to charge down upon two hundred and fifty fixed bayonets.

Dick was eager for a fight, but did not wish to do anything rash.

He did not wish to sacrifice the life of a "Liberty Boy" or a horse, if it could be avoided.

So, instead of giving the order to charge, he gave the order to dismount.

"Lead the horses into the timber and tie them!" he called out. "And then we will give the redcoats all the fight they want!"

A ringing cheer went up from the "Liberty Boys."

They leaped to the ground and led their horses into the timber and tied them.

Then the youths took up positions behind trees and rocks and looked to their weapons.

The redcoats were hastening forward.

They had seen that the force opposed to them was a comparatively small one and were eager to make the attack.

A small stream was flowing between the two parties.

The stream crossed the road at a point only a few yards distant from where the "Liberty Boys" were stationed.

At the point where the stream crossed the road was a bridge about ten feet wide and twenty feet long.

As the redcoats came rushing across the bridge, Dick gave the order and the "Liberty Boys" poured a withering fire into their midst.

Then it was hand-to-hand, and the struggle was a desperate one.

CHAPTER XVII.

STRIKING STRONG BLOWS FOR LIBERTY.

Dick and the "Liberty Boys" fought with such desperate recklessness that their opponents were amazed and appalled.

The first volley from the youths' muskets had thrown the redcoats into disorder, and the charge of the youths, coming so promptly, added to their discomfiture.

The redcoats fired a volley, but fired so wildly as to do scarcely any damage.

In the hand-to-hand combat, the "Liberty Boys" speedily got the better of it.

They clubbed their muskets and laid about them in such a fierce manner that the redcoats went down like tenpins.

Time and again the wild, thrilling battle-cry of the "Liberty Boys" went up.

"Down with the king! Long live Liberty!"

Each time the cry, "Down with the king!" went up, the

"Liberty Boys" came as near putting their words into practice as possible by downing a number of the representatives of the king.

It was indeed a fierce combat.

It was as short as it was fierce.

The redcoats, notwithstanding the fact that they outnumbered the "Liberty Boys" nearly three to one, were badly whipped and they broke and fled back up the road at the top of their speed.

The "Liberty Boys" gave utterance to loud cheers and pursued their enemies a little ways.

Seeing that they were pursued, the redcoats took the timber and then Dick and his "Liberty Boys" returned to where they had left their horses.

Three of the "Liberty Boys" were seriously wounded and a dozen or more were slightly wounded, but not one had been killed.

The redcoats had suffered more.

Twelve had been killed, a score or more had bullet wounds, while at least fifty had been more or less damaged by blows from the butts of the "Liberty Boys' " muskets.

Some of these latter were just struggling to their feet as Dick and the "Liberty Boys" reached the spot where the combat had taken place, and to them Dick said:

"The encounter is over and we will not bother you any more at present. "You can go ahead and look after your dead and wounded, but the next time we meet, look out for us."

The redcoats were evidently relieved.

Doubtless they had expected that they would be put to death.

The "Liberty Boys" got their horses out, and after making litters for the severely wounded, started on their return to the camp.

It was evening when they got there, and the wounded "Liberty Boys" were soon made comfortable.

Although seriously wounded, the brave fellows had not made a single complaint during the trip to the camp.

They did not seem to think of themselves at all.

Their thoughts were of the victory which they had scored over their enemies.

Dick, who was really expert in such matters, he having had a deal of experience, examined the wounds of the "Liberty Boys" and told each one of them that they would certainly pull through.

The youths had every confidence in Dick, and as soon as he told them their wounds were not fatal, and that they would get well, looks of satisfaction and contentment appeared on their faces.

Certainly, if tender care and good nursing would bring

the youths around all right, they were sure of getting well, for the "Liberty Boys" were proverbially as gentle as women in the care of their wounded comrades.

It had become a saying in the patriot army that unless the redcoats killed a "Liberty Boy" stone dead, on the field of battle, they would, sooner or later, have to meet him again.

Dick was very well satisfied with the result of the encounter with the redcoats.

He considered that he and his "Liberty Boys" had struck a strong blow for Liberty.

Dick knew that from now on he would have to be on his guard.

The redcoats would be wild to get even for the severe handling which their men had had.

In order to guard against any possibility of a surprise, Dick had sentinels posted throughout the night.

The night passed quietly, and the next day the "Liberty Boys" started out again.

They did not encounter any redcoats that day.

Neither did they the next.

On the third day, however, they encountered a party of the redcoats, and there was another pitched battle.

As in the former instance this was a decisive victory for the "Liberty Boys."

In this engagement two of the "Liberty Boys" were killed, and several were wounded; but the British suffered much more, nearly a score of them being killed, and as many more wounded.

The "Liberty Boys" had struck another strong blow for Liberty.

A few days later they had another pitched battle.

Again the "Liberty Boys" were successful.

The redcoats were now becoming greatly wrought up.

It made them wild with rage to think that a small band of patriot soldiers could have quarters so near to their main encampment and strike such blows.

They vowed that they would hunt the "rebels" down and exterminate them.

They sent out scouting parties in every direction.

A number of these parties were struck by the "Liberty Boys" and practically exterminated.

At last, however, the redcoats succeeded in learning where the little band of patriot soldiers had its hiding place.

They at once began making preparations for either capturing or exterminating the "rebels" who had given them so much trouble.

When they had finished their plans they proceeded to put them into execution.

One dark night, five hundred picked men came out of the burg and marched in the direction of the little village which were the cabins occupied by the "Liberty Boys."

If the redcoats thought to catch the "Liberty Boys" napping, however, they were destined to find that they had made a sad mistake.

Dick Slater had been doing some spy work himself, and knew what was going on in the redcoat camp.

He had his scouts out constantly and knew the redcoats were coming before they were within a mile of the "Liberty Boys' " headquarters.

Dick knew how many there were of the redcoats, and although his "Liberty Boys" would be outnumbered more than five to one, he did not have much fear regarding the result of the approaching combat.

He believed that the "Liberty Boys" could hold the narrow defile against a regiment.

Dick arranged his men to his satisfaction and then patiently awaited the coming of the enemy.

Dick had sentinels posted at the outer end of the defile and he had instructed them to fire a shot as a signal the instant the redcoats put in an appearance.

Dick had prepared a surprise for the redcoats.

In the defile, almost at the end, where it opened into the valley, the "Liberty Boys" had piled up a lot of dry brush.

It was a large pile, nearly filling the defile.

It was Dick's intention to let a large number of the redcoats enter the defile and then set fire to the brush.

It would blaze up and by its light they would be enabled to shoot the redcoats down.

Suddenly as they crouched there, waiting, there came the report of a musket.

"The signal!" cried Dick. "The redcoats are close at hand!"

A minute later, the two sentinels reached the spot where the "Liberty Boys" were and reported that the redcoats were coming up the defile.

Dick waited until he heard the trampling of the redcoats' feet close at hand, and then he gave the signal to light the fire.

A "Liberty Boy" was stationed beside the brush pile and he quickly started the fire.

A lot of dry leaves had been raked up and these blazed up quickly, setting fire to the brush.

In a few moments the entire brush pile was blazing fiercely.

As Dick had expected, the burning brush pile illuminated the defile from one end to the other.

had expected, the defile was filled with

CHAPTER XVIII.

JESSIE WINTHROP A PRISONER.

Instantly he gave the order to fire.

The "Liberty Boys" opened fire on the enemy.

First they fired a volley from their muskets, and then they brought their pistols into play.

The "Liberty Boys" were great hands to use small arms.

One reason for this was that they were often obliged to fight at close quarters, where pistols were effective.

The result was that they had come to carry, as a common thing, at least four pistols apiece.

But now they had double that number.

They made good use of them, too.

They were so close to the enemy that their pistol shots would do a great deal of damage.

They fired volley after volley, and fairly mowed the redcoats down.

It was terrible; the more so as the British could not fire in return with any effect, the "Liberty Boys" being up on the top of the walls of the ravine.

Notwithstanding the fact that the redcoats outnumbered the "Liberty Boys" at least five to one, they were speedily getting the worst of it.

Dick, who was watching affairs with the eyes of a hawk, saw this, and he made up his mind to strike a stronger blow for Liberty than they had yet struck since coming to the region.

He made up his mind to charge the redcoats.

When the pistols had all been emptied, he gave the order: "Charge!"

Down the sides of the ravine dashed the "Liberty Boys."

Their wild battle-cry went up.

"Down with the king! Long live Liberty!"

They cheered wildly.

They were upon the redcoats with the resistless force of an avalanche.

This on top of the surprise, and the rough handling which they had experienced, was too much for the redcoats.

They broke and fled.

They fairly tumbled over one another in their haste to get out of the defile and away.

It was an utter rout.

The "Liberty Boys" had triumphed.

The redcoats were so thoroughly whipped that they went back to Orangeburg.

They did not stop or return to try another attack.

The "Liberty Boys" carried the wounded redcoats into the camp and gave them such attention as was possible, and next morning they gave burial to the dead soldiers.

Naturally, the youths were elated over their victory.

They had done wonderful work, had struck some strong blows for Liberty, and were eager to strike more.

They realized, however, that their position was one of great danger.

The British would be wild to get revenge, and would do everything in their power to square the account with the "Liberty Boys."

Dick knew this, and was on his guard.

A week later Dick learned that General Greene and the patriot army was advancing.

One of Dick's scouts had encountered a scout from the patriot army, and had learned that General Greene was going to advance upon Orangeburg and attack the British.

For the next day or two the "Liberty Boys" busied themselves in keeping the scouts and spies from the British camp from finding out that the patriot army was advancing.

They captured several spies, and drove two or three scouting parties back into Orangeburg, but it was impossible to cover the ground so closely that no one could get through, and a British spy got wind of the approach of the patriot force, and carried the news to Orangeburg.

The redcoats became alarmed at once.

Their position was far from being strong, and the commanding officer, Colonel Stuart—Lord Rawdon had become ill, and gone back to England—decided to evacuate and retire to a stronger position.

At noon of the day the redcoats evacuated Orangeburg. Dick Slater mounted his horse and rode away toward the west.

General Greene and the patriot army were half a day's march distant, yet, and Dick decided to go and call on his young friends, Jesse and Jessie Winthrop, who were living at a farmhouse three miles distant.

It was Dick's intention to spend the afternoon there, and then join General Greene's army when it came along.

He was riding along at a gallop, when on rounding a bend in the road—which at this point ran through heavy timber—Dick suddenly came face to face with Simon Snook, the rascally step-father of Jesse and Jessie Winthrop.

And with him, tied upon the back of another horse, was

Jessie Winthrop, the beautiful girl the ruffian had wanted for his wife.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE DEFEAT THAT WAS A VICTORY.

Jessie Winthrop was a prisoner!

Dick realized this fact upon the instant that he laid eyes on the pair.

Simon Snook, the scoundrelly step-father of the girl, had not given up his intention of making the girl marry him, it seemed.

But he would have to give it up, now.

This was the thought that went through the mind of Dick Slater.

Quick as a flash he drew a pistol and leveled it at Snook.

"Up with your hands, you scoundrel!" he cried.

"Oh, save me! Save me!" cried Jessie.

"I will save you!" cried Dick. "And I will put a bullet through you, Simon Snook, if you don't do what I tell you to do!"

Snook was desperate.

He was more desperate than Dick had any idea of.

Quick as a flash he slipped from his horse, and reaching up, he pulled Jessie off her horse.

Then he started toward the timber at the side of the road.

He kept the girl between himself and Dick, and used her as a shield.

"Let go of that girl!" cried Dick. "Stop, I say, or it will be the worse for you!"

Dick spurred his horse forward.

Snook paused and stood at bay.

Holding the girl firmly with his left arm, he drew an ugly-looking knife with his right hand, and cried out:

"Stop! Stop, or I will kill this girl, as sure as my name is Simon Snook!"

Dick brought his horse to a stop and leaped to the ground.

"Listen to me, Simon Snook," he said, in a hard, stern tone of voice, "if you injure a hair of that girl's head, I will have your life! More, I will take you to the camp of the 'Liberty Boys,' and we will torture you—will put you to death by inches!"

"You advance another step, and the girl dies!" hissed Snook.

As he spoke he flourished the knife in the air.

Crack!

Dick had fired.

He was a wonderful snap-shot, and he had fired at the hand holding the knife.

It was a shot that could not have been successfully made once in a dozen times, but this time Dick was successful.

The bullet struck Snook's hand, and, passing through it, knocked the knife flying.

A wild yell of pain and terror escaped the lips of the wounded ruffian.

He let go of the girl, and, leaping into the timber, fled at the top of his speed.

Doubtless he thought he was hurt a great deal worse than he really was.

Dick leaped forward and cut the rope binding the arms of the girl.

The poor girl was almost ready to faint, now that the strain was removed and she knew she was safe.

She quickly told her story.

She had been down at a stream which ran near the house where she was staying, fishing, and Snook had surprised and made a prisoner of her.

The ruffian had threatened to take her life if she cried out, and so she had feared to do so.

But for the meeting with Dick, Snook would undoubtedly have succeeded in getting away in safety, and taking Jessie with him.

Dick told the girl he was on his way to see her and her brother, and he assisted her to mount, and mounting his horse, and leading the one abandoned by Snook, he rode in the direction of the girl's home, Jessie riding beside him and keeping up a lively conversation.

She was very happy, seemingly, now that she had escaped from the man whom she hated and feared.

Then, too, possibly the fact that she was in the company of the handsome youth who had come to the rescue of herself and brother once before may have had something to do with making her feel happy and lively.

We leave that for our readers to decide.

Half an hour later the two reached the house where Jessie and her brother had found a home.

The fact that the girl was missing had just been discovered, and Mr. Wilford, the man of the house, and Jessie's brother Jesse were just starting out in search of Jessie.

They were delighted to see the girl arrive in company with Dick, and when they heard the story of the attempted abduction their anger knew no bounds.

Jesse vowed that he would shoot his rascally step-father on sight.

Mrs. Wilford, who had learned to love the beautiful girl with almost as strong affection as a mother feels for a child, was delighted to see Jessie return in safety.

Dick was made a hero of, and praised till he blushed through his heavy coat of tan.

He spent a very enjoyable afternoon, and was almost sorry when the head of the column of the advance guard of the patriot army put in an appearance at about half-past five o'clock.

The soldiers recognized Dick as they reached the house and saw him standing by the gate, and a wild cheer went up.

"Three cheers for Dick Slater!" cried a soldier, and the cheers were given with a will.

Dick waved his hand in return, and Jessie, who stood beside the youth, said, in a tone which vibrated with pride: "They all seem to love you!"

When General Greene came along he greeted Dick, warmly.

He was delighted to meet his brave young scout and spy, and was glad to learn that the "Liberty Boys" had succeeded in dealing the redcoats some strong blows.

Dick introduced General Greene to Mr. and Mrs. Wilford, and to Jesse and Jessie, and they were greeted pleasantly by the patriot commander.

When Jesse learned that Dick was the captain of a company of youths of about his (Jesse's) age, he was eager to join, and he was urged to do so by his sister.

When General Greene was ready to go on his way, with the army, Dick bade good-by to Mr. and Mrs. Wilford and Jessie Winthrop, and accompanied the general.

Jesse Winthrop accompanied Dick.

When the army went into camp, Dick and Jesse made their way to the little valley where the "Liberty Boys" had their headquarters.

The "Liberty Boys" spent this night in their cabins in the valley, but were up bright and early next morning and joined the main army.

About nine o'clock the patriot army marched into Warrensburg only to find the British army gone.

The redcoats had retreated toward Charleston, and the only thing to do was to follow them.

This General Greene did.

Two days later General Greene and his army reached the vicinity of Eutaw Springs.

It was found that the British army had taken up their quarters at this point.

The British occupied rather a strong position.

General Greene realized this fact, and waited, so as to

have time to secure a thorough knowledge of position and its defenses before making an attack.

He called upon Dick Slater to secure this information and Dick did so.

When all was in readiness, General Greene attacked.

Early in the morning of September 8th, the battle began.

The patriots attacked fiercely, and in the first part of the battle the British were worsted.

Their line was broken and they were driven from the field.

Colonel Stuart, the British commander, succeeded in rallying his men, however, and they again formed a line, utilizing a brick house and palisaded garden as a defense. They were enabled to hold their ground in the last part of the battle.

Although the patriot soldiers fought desperately, they could not drive the British back.

As a result of this, the battle of Eutaw Springs is known down in history as a British victory; as, however, the British, the very next evening, beat a hasty retreat, they were hotly pursued a distance of thirty miles by the patriots, and Lee, and Dick Slater and his "Liberty Boys," were confident that the battle was in reality a victory for the patriot army.

This was the last real battle fought in South Carolina.

The British had been driven back into Charleston, and remained cooped up there till the end of the war.

General Greene had triumphed gloriously in this campaign and it may, with truth, be said that he had been aided greatly by the "Liberty Boys," who dealt such strong blows for Liberty.

THE END.

The next number (51) of "The Liberty Bell" contains "THE LIBERTY BOYS' TRIUMPH: BEATING THE REDCOATS AT THE BATTLE OF EUTAW SPRINGS," by Harry Moore.

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